INTRODUCTION

THE TEXT of the *Exhortation to the Greeks* is preserved in four Greek manuscripts, the earliest of which is the *Arethas-Codex* (cod. Paris. 451) of the year 914. These manuscripts as well as the original Greek edition and the first Latin translation list it among the genuine works of Justin.[1] However, not only because of its literary style, but also by reason of its doctrinal content (for example, its criticism of pagan philosophers), this work does not appear to have issued from the pen of St. Justin Martyr. However, since it was ascribed to him by Stephen Gobarus as far back as the sixth century,[2] it is listed among the doubtful writings. Those who deny its genuineness assign to the work various dates, ranging from 180 to 360.[3]

The *Exhortation* points out to the pagans that they have no reliable teachers of religion, for their wise men, poets and philosophers, had no sound knowledge of religious matters. What rays of truth may have appeared here and there in their writings were borrowed from the Jewish Prophets, who were older and wiser than they. In order to gain a full knowledge of true religion, the Greeks therefore should study the writings of the Prophets and of the Christians who depend upon them.

The texts used for this translation are the Greek text of Migne, PG 6.241-312, and that of J.C.T. von Otto, *Corpus apologetarum Christianorum saeculi secundi* (Jena 1879) II 18-126.

1 So does Eusebius (*Hist. eccl.* 4.18.1); cf. above p. 16 notes 44 and 45.
2 Cf. Photius, cod. 232; *P.G.* 103.1100 D.
3 Ph. Haeuser, *Pseudo-Justinus Mahnrede an die Hellenen* (Bibl. d. Kirchenväter Bd. 33, 1917) 238f. thinks the complete absence of Neoplatonic ideas suggests its composition before 250 A.D.

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CONTENTS

Chapter		*Page*
1	Introduction	373
2	Greek poets are not reliable religious teachers	374
3	The teachings of Thales and his followers	377
4	The teachings of Pythagoras, Epicurus, and Empedocles	378
5	The doctrines of Plato and Aristotle	379
6	Plato and Aristotle disagreed on some points	381
7	Plato contradicts himself	382
8	The Christian's teachers	383
9	The testimony of Greek writers concerning the antiquity of Moses	384
10	The early life of Moses	386
11	Even pagan oracles give testimony of Moses	387
12	Moses more ancient than the pagan Philosophers	388
13	The Septuagint	389
14	Warning to shun the error of their forefathers	391
15	Monotheism in the writings of Orpheus	391
16	Monotheism in the oracles of the Sibyl	393
17	Monotheism in the *Iliad* of Homer	394
18	Monotheism of Sophocles	395
19	Monotheism of Pythagoras	396
20	Monotheism of Plato	397
21	God has no Name	398
22	Plato, through fear, was ambiguous	399

23 Discrepancy in Plato 401
24 Homer and Plato both taught Monotheism 401
25 Plato feared to mention the name of Moses 403
26 Plato read the prophetic writings 405
27 Plato and the judgment 406
28 Homer's debt to the Prophets 408
29 Plato's doctrine of form borrowed from Moses . . . 411
30 Plato and Homer followed Moses' doctrine of man's origin 412
31 Another example of Plato's dependence upon the Prophets 413
32 Plato knew of the Holy Spirit 414
33 Plato's conception of time borrowed from Moses . . 415
34 Even the idol-makers were influenced by the Scriptures . 416
35 Plea to the Greeks 417
36 The philosophers did not have true knowledge . . . 418
37 The Sibylline oracles 419
38 Plea to heed the Sibyl and the Prophets 422

EXHORTATION TO THE GREEKS

Chapter 1

BESEECH GOD, at the beginning of this my plea to you Greeks, that I may know the words which I ought to address to you, and that, after you have restrained your usual fondness for polemics and have been freed of your fathers' error, you may prefer to accept what is for your own good. And if what at first seemed useless to you now appears to be useful, do not think that you thereby offend your ancestors. A thorough examination often shows that things which had appeared to be of great value proved to be otherwise when subjected to close scrutiny. Now, since we intend to discuss the true religion (and it is my studied opinion that they who wish to pass their lives in safety consider nothing more important than true religion, because of the judgment which awaits us at the end of this life, and which is proclaimed not only by our ancestors in God, namely, the prophets and lawgivers, but also by those men from your midst whom you consider wise, not only poets, but also philosophers, who proclaimed among you that they had reached the true knowledge of God), I deem it advisable that we first examine the teachers of religion, both our teachers and yours, in order to determine who they were, when they lived, and how great a reputation they enjoy. Thus, they who inherited a false religion from their ancestors may, on perceiving the truths, be freed from their old error. While we, by this means, may make manifest that we practice the religion of our forefathers in God.

Chapter 2

Whom, therefore, my dear friends from Greece, do you consider your religious teachers? The poets? You surely would not admit that to men who know the poets, for such men know what silly ideas the poets have concerning the origin of the gods. Take, for example, that prince of poets, your most illustrious Homer. First of all, he states that the gods originated from water, for he wrote:

> '[To visit there] *the parent of the Gods*
> *Oceanus, and Tethys* [his espoused],
> *Mother of all.*'[1]

Remember, too what he wrote of the one whom you deem the first of the gods, and whom he often calls the father of gods and men, for he said: *'Jupiter, who is the dispenser of war to men.'*[2]

In truth, he claims that Jupiter was not only the dispenser of war to the army, but also, through his daughter [Venus], caused the Trojans to take a false oath. Homer further portrays him in love, and in a fit of anger, and bemoaning his lot, and as the object of a plot on the part of the other gods, and as once saying about his own son:

> *'Alas, he falls, my most beloved of men!*
> *Sarpedon, vanquished by Patroclus, falls!*
> *So will the fates.'*[3]

And on another occasion Jupiter said of Hector:

> *'Ah, I behold a warrior dear to me*
> *Around the walls of Ilium driven, and grieve*
> *For Hector.'*[4]

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1 Cf. William Cowper's translation of *Iliad* 14.360. The words enclosed in brackets are not in Justin's quotation.
2 Cf. Cowper, *Iliad* 19.266.
3 *Ibid.* 16.526.
4 *Ibid.* 22.195.

What he has to say of the plot of the other gods against Jupiter is evident from his following verses:

'When the other Olympians—Juno, Neptune and Minerva wished to bind him.'[5]

And Jupiter would most certainly have been bound by these blessed gods had they not feared the one they call Briareus. By using Homer's own words, we must recall for your benefit what he said of Jupiter's love affairs. Indeed, he said that Jupiter thus addressed Juno:

'For never Goddess pour'd, nor woman yet
So full a tide of love into my breast;
I never loved Ixion's consort thus
[Who bore Pirithoüs, wise as we in heaven;]
Nor sweet Acrisian Danäe, [from whom
Sprang Perseus, noblest of the race of man;]
Nor Phoenix' daughter fair, [of whom were born
Minos unmatch'd but by the powers above,
And Rhadamanthus;] *nor yet Semele,*
Nor yet Alcmena, who in Thebes [produced
The valiant Hercules; and though my son
By Semele were Bacchus, joy of man;]
Nor Ceres golden-hair'd, nor high-enthroned
Latona in the skies, no—nor thyself
[As now I love thee, and my soul perceive
O'erwhelm'd with sweetness of intense desire.]'[6]

We should also recall what can be learned from the Homeric poems of the other gods, especially what sufferings they endured at the hands of mortal men. For example, he relates how Mars and Venus were wounded by Diomede. Another example of the sufferings of many other gods is had in the

5 *Ibid.* 1.491.
6 *Ibid.* 14.378. The bracketed words are not in Justin's quotation.

case of Dione, who said, to console her daughter:

> *'My child! how hard soe'er thy sufferings seem*
> *Endure them patiently. Full many a wrong*
> *From human hands profane the Gods endure,*
> *And many a painful stroke, mankind from ours.*
> *Mars once endured much wrong, when on a time*
> *Him Otus bound and Ephialtes fast,*
> *Sons of Alöeus, and full thirteen moons*
> *In brazen thraldom held him.* [There, at length,
> The fierce blood-nourished Mars had pined away,
> But that Eëriboea, loveliest nymph,
> His step-mother, in happy hour disclosed
> To Mercury the story of his wrongs;
> He stole the prisoner forth, but with his woes
> Already worn, languid and fetter-gall'd.]
> *Nor Juno less endured, when erst the bold*
> *Son of Amphytrion with tridental shaft*
> *Her bosom pierced; she then the misery felt*
> *Of irremediable pain severe.*
> *Nor suffer'd Pluto less, of all the Gods*
> *Gigantic most, by the same son of Jove*
> *Alcides, at the portals of the dead*
> *Transfix'd and fill'd with anguish; he the house*
> *Of Jove and the Olympian summit sought*
> *Dejected, torture-stung, for sore the shaft*
> *Oppress'd him, into his huge shoulder driven.'*[7]

Nor would it be amiss to recall the spectacle of your gods, arrayed against one another in battle formation, for your own poet tells that tale when he writes:

> *'A dreaded spectacle; with such a sound*
> *The Powers eternal into battle rush'd.*

7 *Ibid.* 5.443.

Opposed to Neptune, King of the vast Deep,
Apollo stood with his wing'd arrows arm'd;
Pallas to Mars; Diana shaft-expert,
Sister of Phoebus, in her golden bow
Rejoicing, with whose shouts the forests ring
To Juno; Mercury, for useful arts
Famed, to Latona.'[8]

Such things have you been taught, not only by Homer, but also by Hesiod. If, therefore, you believe your most famous poets, when they describe the genealogies of your gods, you must come to the conclusion that your gods exist actually as portrayed by the poets, or that they did not exist at all.

Chapter 3

Now, if you refrain from quoting the poets, because you claim that poetic license permits them to fabricate myths and, under the guise of mythology, to attribute many false things to the gods, what other teachers of religion would you have, and where would you say they acquired such knowledge of your religion? (For it is impossible to gain a knowledge of such great and divine matters, unless from those who were already acquainted with these matters.) Undoubtedly, you will reply: the sages and philosophers. For it is your custom to run to them, as to a fortified wall, whenever your poets' opinions of the gods are quoted. Therefore, since we should proceed in chronological order, I shall cite the opinions of your wise men in that order, and you will see that their theology is much more ridiculous than that of your poets. First of all, Thales of Miletus, that pioneer student of natural philosophy, claimed that the first principle of all things was

8 *Ibid.* 20.85.

water, for he taught that all things came from water and that eventually all things returned to water. Another native of Miletus, Anaximander, later held that the first principle of all things was the infinite, from which everything sprang and into which all things fell back. A third Miletan, Anaximenes, thought that air was the first principle from which all things originated and into which they all resolved. Heraclitus and Hippasus, both from Metapontus, claim that fire is the first cause from which all things proceed, and in which they will all terminate. Anaxagoras of Clazomenae asserts that the homogeneous particles are the first principles of all things. The Athenian Archelaus, son of Apollodorus, says that the infinite air, with its density and rarity, is the first principle of all things. All these men, forming a succession from Thales on, followed what they called a natural philosophy.

Chapter 4

Tracing another school of thought, we see that Pythagoras of Samos, son of Mnesarchus, considers numbers, with their proportion and harmony, and their resultant elements, as the basis of things. In his system he also includes the unity and infinite duality of numbers.[1] Epicurus, the Athenian, son of Neocles, teaches the first cause of beings to be bodies which are perceived by the mind, but which have no emptiness, are not begotten, cannot deteriorate or be broken; which cannot be formed or changed by their parts, and, therefore, can be perceived by the mind. Empedocles of Agrigentum, son of Meton, asserted that there were four elements, (namely, fire, air, water and earth), and two principal powers, love

1 Pythagoras taught that the number one (unity) was equal to God, while the number two (the indefinite duality) was equal to evil; a strange dualism based on numbers.

(the power of union) and hate (the power of separation). You can readily perceive the confusion that exists among those who you say are your wise men—whom you call your teachers of religion. Some of them affirm that water is the first principle of all things; others say that air is; still others, fire; and others claim that some other of the above-mentioned elements were the first causes. These men actually said these things; furthermore, all of them used specious arguments to prove their unsound teachings, and each one endeavored to show that his own doctrine was more acceptable than the next. Can you tell me, therefore, my dear Greek friends, how they who look for salvation could safely approach these philosophers to learn from them the true religion, when the philosophers themselves cannot agree among themselves, but in their philosophical disputes contradict one another's opinions?

Chapter 5

Perhaps they who refuse to abandon their ancient and antiquated error will insist that they did not receive their religious instruction from the above-mentioned persons, but from those two whom they consider the most noted and accomplished philosophers, namely, Plato and Aristotle. Indeed, they think that these two have assimilated a knowledge of the true and perfect religion. But I would first like to inquire of those who make such a claim: From whom have Plato and Aristotle acquired such knowledge? It would not be possible for them to either have such knowledge or be able to transmit it accurately to others, unless they learned such great and divine matters from someone who knew them. Secondly, it is my opinion that the teachings of these two philosophers should be submitted to a close examination, in order to determine whether they openly contradict each other.

If we discover that they do not agree with each other, we should easily conclude that they also are ignorant. For Plato, acting as though he had just descended from Heaven and had accurately learned and witnessed all celestial matters, states that the Most High God exists in a fiery substance. Yet Aristotle, in explaining at length his own system of philosophy in a book addressed to Alexander the Macedonian, openly and expertly refutes Plato's opinion, claiming that God does not exist in a fiery substance. Instead, he said that God exists in a mysterious sort of ethereal and immutable body, a kind of fifth substance which he himself invented. Here are his words: 'It is not true, as some have erroneously stated of the Divinity, that God exists in a fiery substance.' Furthermore, as if not satisfied with this defamation of Plato, he quotes as a witness to the truth of this theory of an ethereal body, one whom Plato had expelled from his republic, after branding him a liar and a third imitator of the images of truth[1] (for that is what Plato calls Homer). Aristotle wrote: 'Thus states Homer: "Jupiter obtained the broad heaven in the air and the clouds." '[2] In this way, he hoped to give further weight to his opinion by the authority of Homer's testimony, not realizing that, if he used Homer to prove the truth of his statements, many of his doctrines would, on the contrary, be proved false. Thales of Miletus, one of their first philosophers, using Homer as his authority, will refute Aristotle's first opinions of the causes of things. Indeed, while Aristotle affirmed that God and matter are the first causes

1 Cf. *De Republica* 10.2. Ideas, according to Plato, could be acted upon in three ways. First of all, God is the cause of an idea. Then, a workman may give that idea a concrete form, for example, a carpenter who constructs a table. Finally, another may reproduce or imitate this concrete object, for example, an artist on canvas or a poet in verse. Thus, the poet, an imitator, would be the third to act on the same idea. Cf. Migne, *PG* 6.252.

2 *Iliad* 15.192.

of things, Thales, their oldest sage, claimed that water is the first principle of all things, since they not only come from water, but eventually will all be resolved into water. He first bases his opinion upon the fact that the seed of all living creatures, which is really their first cause, is moist. His second reason is that all plants grow and bear fruit when they have moisture, but wither away and die when deprived of it. Apparently not satisfied with these reasons, he finally quoted as his most authoritative testimony the words of Homer: *'Ocean, the origin of all things.'*[3] Might not Thales, with good reason, object: 'Why, O Aristotle, do you regard Homer as a paragon of truth when you use him to refute the tenets of Plato, but think him untruthful when you hold an opinion contrary to ours?'

Chapter 6

It is also quite evident that these great sages of yours even disagree on other points of teaching. While Plato teaches three first causes of all things, namely, God, matter, and form (God, the creator of all things; matter, the subject of the first formation of creatures, and the object upon which God exercises His almighty power; and form, the type of each creature), Aristotle names only God and matter as first principles, not mentioning form at all. They even disagree in their conception of heavenly matters. Plato claims that the First God and the ideas occupy the first place in the immovable sphere of the highest heaven, whereas Aristole teaches that next to the First God are, not ideas, but certain gods, discernible only to the mind. Thus, therefore, do they disagree about heavenly matters. Thus, it is clear that they not only cannot grasp earthly matters, but also, since they are unable to agree on such

3 Cf. Cowper, *Iliad* 14.360.

topics, they cannot command our respect of their teachings on heavenly matters. From their own statements it is also evident that their teachings on the present nature of the human soul do not coincide. According to Plato, the human soul is made up of three parts, each part having a special faculty: the first, of reasoning, the second, of feeling, and the third, of desiring. Aristotle, on the contrary, declares that the human soul has only the reasoning faculty, and he denies that it is composed of those other corruptible parts. Furthermore, Plato emphatically affirms that 'the entire soul is immortal.' While Aristotle, calling the soul the culmination [of each thing's potentialities], declares that it is not immortal, but mortal. Plato claims that it is always in motion, whereas Aristotle states that it is immovable, since it precedes all motion.

Chapter 7

The above statements prove that these two philosophers held contradictory views. From a close study of their writings, one can see that they even contradicted their own utterances. Plato, to cite at least one example, in one passage states that there are three first causes of all things, God, matter, and form; but in another passage he adds a fourth cause, the universal soul. In another place he teaches that matter is uncreated; but in a later passage, that it is created. At one time he asserts that form is a specific first principle which exists of itself; at another, he states that it belongs to the realm of perceptions. After asserting that every created thing is subject to destruction, he contradicts himself by saying that some created things are indestructible and immortal. Why do your supposedly wise men contradict each other and themselves? Because they will not learn from those who know; instead, they think that they can arrive at a full knowl-

edge of heavenly things by the subtlety of their human reasoning, when they cannot understand even earthly matters. Indeed, some of your philosophers affirm that the human soul is in us, while others are sure that it is around us. Thus, even on the subject of the soul they failed to come to an agreement, but, split into factions, they argued and, as it were, apportioned ignorance among themselves. For some of them state that the soul is fire, or the air; others claim that it is the mind, or motion, or an exhalation; others affirm that it is a power emanating from the stars; others, that it is a number endowed with the power of motion; and others, a fertilizing water. As a result, a state of confusion prevails, due to their discordant teachings, and the one redeeming feature of this, in the minds of prudent men, is that they have succeeded in pointing out one another's faulty and erroneous doctrines.

Chapter 8

It is logical, then, since you cannot learn any religious truths from your own teachers, whose ignorance is evident to you from their contradictions, to turn to our [Christian] forefathers. Indeed, they lived long before your teachers, and what they taught was not of their own invention. Neither did they contradict or argue with one another. Instead, without strife or quarrel, they passed on to us the knowledge they had received from God. Men cannot naturally perceive such great divine truths through their human faculties, but only by means of the special gift which came from Heaven upon these holy men. These men were not obliged to rely upon rhetorical expressions, nor did they have to indulge in a war of words, but only to submit their purified persons to the direction of the Holy Spirit, so that this divine plectrum from Heaven, as it were, by using them as a harp or lyre, might

reveal to us divine and celestial truths. Therefore, as if by one mouth and one tongue, without contradicting themselves or one another, thev have instructed us concerning God, the origin of the world, the creation of man, the immortality of his soul, the future judgment, and all other things which we should know. Thus, in various places and at different times they have handed down to us the divine doctrine.

Chapter 9

I will begin with Moses, our first Prophet and lawmaker. First of all, I will describe at what time in history he appeared, and this I will do by citing the testimony of writers whom you consider most trustworthy. For it is not my purpose to prove my statements only from our own divine historical documents, which you as yet refuse to recognize because of the deep-rooted error you inherited from your forefathers, but also by your own historical writings, which, you will notice, make no reference to our religion. Thus, I will prove to you (and I have also the Greek histories to back me up), that Moses, our first religious instructor, was much older than any of your teachers, whether he be sage, poet, historian, philosopher, or lawgiver. Indeed, Moses is mentioned as the chief ruler of the Jewish people even in the days of Ogyges and Inachus, who are regarded by some of your poets as having their origin from the soil itself. As references, you may consult the first book of Polemon's *History of the Greeks,* the book against the Jews written by Appion, son of Posidonius, and the fourth book of Appion's *History,* where he states that, while Inachus was king of Argos, Moses led the Jews in a revolt against Amasis, king of the Egyptians. Ptolemy the Mendesian makes the same statements in his *History of Egypt.* Moses also is depicted as a very ancient and vener-

able leader of the Jews by such writers of Athenian history as Hellanicus, Philochorus (author of the *History of Attica*), Castor, Thallus, and Alexander Polyhistor, as well as by those very learned Jewish historians, Philo and Josephus. This last-named historian, in order to show the antiquity of the history about which he wrote, entitled his work, *The Jewish Antiquities of Flavius Josephus,* the word 'antiquities' signifying the age of the history. Diodorus, your most famous historian, spent thirty years in summarizing various collections of books, and, to gain the exact truth of events, he traveled (as he states) over Asia and Europe. After he thus saw many things with his own eyes, he composed forty books on history. In the first of these books he affirmed that he learned from the Egyptian priests that Moses was the oldest, in fact, the first, legislator. Here are the words of Diodorus: 'After the legendary period of Egyptian social life which the gods and heroes are alleged to have molded, they say that Moses[1] first induced the people to use written laws; and he is depicted as a man of great spirit and a great authority on social matters.' Then, further on, when Diodorus lists the ancient legislators, he places Moses at the top of the list. Here are his exact words: 'It is the tradition among the Jews that Moses attributed his laws to the God who is called Jahve,[2] either because these laws were considered the result of a wonderfully divine plan which would benefit very many men, or because it was thought that the people would more readily obey these laws when they contemplated the dignity and power of the alleged lawmakers. They say that Sasunchis, a very intelligent man, was the second Egyptian lawgiver. The third was King Sesonchosis, who was not only

1 Justin here confused Moses with Menes.
2 Cf. Migne, *PG* 6.259, n. 97. The text here must be reconstructed from the context of Diodorus.

Egypt's most famous military genius, but he also restrained that warlike nation with wise laws. The fourth legislator was King Bocchoris, a wise and extremely capable man. King Amasis, who succeeded him, is said to have laid down the regulations for the provincial governors and for the general administration of the Egyptian government. Darius, the father of Xerxes, is said to have been the sixth lawmaker of the Egyptians.'

Chapter 10

You see, my Greek friends, that the testimony of Moses' antiquity was written by those who do not belong to our religion. Furthermore, these writers affirmed that their information was gathered from the Egyptian priests, among whom Moses was born and educated; in fact, he was given a very thorough Egyptian education, since he was the adopted son of the king's daughter. For this very reason, much attention was centered on him, as those wisest of historians (Philo and Josephus) relate in their biography of Moses, in which they record his genealogy and deeds. For, in their *History of the Jews,* these historians state that Moses was of the Chaldaean race, that he was born in Egypt after his forefathers had migrated from Phoenicia to that country because of a famine, and that because of his rare virtue God wished to honor him by making him the leader and lawmaker of his own people at that time when God deemed it opportune for the Hebrews to leave Egypt and return to their own land. God first gave Moses that divine and prophetic gift with which holy men of those days were endowed, and He made him our first religious instructor. Then, after him, God bestowed the same gift upon the rest of the Prophets, who taught us the same doctrines on the same topics. These are the men whom we claim as our teachers. Everything they

taught us was through that God-given gift, and nothing came from their own intellect.

Chapter 11

Since you are unwilling to cast off your ancestors' old error and to accept the doctrine of your teachers, I ask you: What credible religious teachers have you? As I have frequently said, they who have not received an understanding of these great divine matters from those who know them cannot have a personal knowledge of these truths, nor can they direct others to a true knowledge of them. As you rejected your poets as religious teachers, you probably have renounced your philosophers, also, since it has been proved beyond all doubt that their pronouncements are fraught with ignorance and chicanery. I have been told that as a last resort you will, perhaps, turn to the sophistry of the oracles. It is proper for me to relate, therefore, what I once heard from your people about the oracular answers. They tell how a man once asked your oracle who were the really religious men. The oracle is said to have replied: 'The only ones who have acquired true wisdom are the Chaldaeans and the Hebrews, who worship God Himself, the self-begotten King.'[1]

Since you are convinced that you can attain truth by means of your oracles, when you read over the historical writings and recall what has been written about Moses by those outside our religion, and when you realize that Moses and the other Prophets were of the Chaldaean and Hebrew race, do not think it incredible that a man, who descended from a God-fearing people and who followed the piety of his forefathers, should be picked by God as the recipient of this great gift, and become known as the first of all the Prophets.

1 Eusebius (*Praeparatio* 9.10) states that Porphyrius had recorded this oracle in his *De philosophia ex oraculis.*

Chapter 12

The next point that should be considered is the period during which your philosophers lived, in order that you may realize how recent and brief that period was. The antiquity of Moses will thus be very evident from a comparison to the age of your philosophers. But, lest I appear too profuse by a lengthy discussion of this period and by producing too great a number of proofs, I propose the following arguments as sufficient evidence. Socrates was the teacher of Plato; Plato, in turn, was the teacher of Aristotle. These men were contemporaries of Philip, and Alexander of Macedon, and of the Athenian orators, as the *Philippics* of Demosthenes indicate. Alexander's biographers clearly prove that during his reign he was friendly with Aristotle. From this it is evident that the history of Moses is by far older than all the profane histories. You should also keep in mind that there is no recorded Greek history prior to the beginning of the Olympiad era, nor is there a really ancient work which records the deeds of the Greeks or barbarians. Before that time there existed only the history of the Prophet Moses, which he was divinely inspired to write in Hebrew letters. Indeed, Greek letters were not yet used, for philologists point out that Cadmus first brought the alphabet to the Greeks from Phoenicia. Even Plato, your foremost philosopher, refers to the alphabet as a recent discovery. He stated in his *Timaeus* that Solon, the wisest of the sages, told Critias that on a recent trip to Egypt a very old Egyptian priest said to him: 'O Solon, Solon, you Greeks are always children; there is not an old Greek among you.' Then he continued: 'In spirit you are all young, for you have no sayings passed down to you as an ancient tradition, nor any age-old doctrine. You remain in ignorance, because, generation after generation, the posterity

of those days died without expressing themselves, for they had no alphabet.'[1] You should therefore realize that all your histories have been written in this recently-invented Greek alphabet, and, if you take the time to investigate, you will find that all your ancient poets, lawmakers, historians, philosophers, and orators composed their works with Greek letters.

Chapter 13

If, however, anyone should object that the Mosaic and other prophetic writings were also written in Greek, he ought to consult the history texts of those who are not of our people. He will find that when Ptolemy,[1] the Egyptian king, had constructed his library at Alexandria and had filled it with books collected from every land, he learned of the existence of those carefully treasured and very ancient historical works written in Hebrew. So that he might become acquainted with their contents, he sent to Jerusalem for seventy scholars who were versed in both Greek and Hebrew, and he set them to the task of translating the books. Lest this work be interrupted and delayed by outside interference, he ordered the construction of individual rooms for each translator, not in the city itself, but about a mile[2] away (where the Pharos stood). Another reason for this was to have each scholar make his own translation. Accordingly, attendants were assigned to care for their needs and to prevent one from communicating with another, in order that the accuracy of the work might become more apparent by the uniformity of the translations. When the king learned that the seventy scholars in their re-

1 Cf. Maran in Migne, *PG* 6.265, n.12.

1 I.e., Ptolomeus Philadelphus (286 B.C.). According to St. Jerome (*Praef. in Pent.*), the *Seventy* translated only the Pentateuch.
2 Literally, 'seven stadia.'

spective translations had not only conveyed the same meaning, but had done so with the same words, and had not contradicted one another in a single instance, but had described the same things in the same way, he was so astonished that he concluded that the translation had been made by divine power, and he considered the men to be justly worthy of praise, since they were so dear to God. Thus, when he sent them back to their own land, he conferred many gifts upon them. And when he naturally marvelled at these books and concluded that they must be divine, he set them apart in his library and declared them sacred. It is not fiction or fable that we recount to you, O Greeks, for we have been in Alexandria and have seen the remains of the little rooms which are still preserved at the Pharos, and we relate to you what we have heard from the lips of the inhabitants as part of the tradition of their country. You can learn the same thing from others, also, especially from those two learned and venerable men who have recorded this happening, Philo and Josephus,[3] and many others besides. If anyone should object that these books belong to the Jews (since they are even now preserved in their synagogues), and not to us [Christians], and that it would be useless for us to say that we learned our religion from them, he should know from an examination of those books that their doctrinal content refers to us [Christians], and not to the Jews.[4] The fact that these books containing our religious doctrines are preserved among the Jews even to this day is but the work of Divine Providence on our behalf. If we were to produce these books out of the Church, they who are ever eager to slander us would have a chance to accuse us of deception. Instead, we ask that they be produced from the synagogue of the Jews, so that from these

3 Cf. Josephus, *Antiquitates* 12.2, and Philo, *De vita Moysis*.
4 Cf. Eusebius, *Demonstratio* 1.6.

very books still preserved among them it might be clearly and manifestly shown that the laws which the holy men wrote to instruct really belong to us [Christians].

Chapter 14

You Greeks should therefore think of the future and of the future judgment, foretold not only by the godly, but also the ungodly, so that you might not, without realizing it, fall into the error of your forefathers, nor begin to think that the doctrine which they in their error handed down to you is true. Realizing how dangerous such a mistake would be, you should inquire and study intently the doctrines of those whom you call your teachers. For, by Divine Providence, they were forced against their will to relate many things in our favor, especially those writers who visited Egypt and profited from the religiousness of Moses and his ancestors. I am sure that from a casual reading of the historical works of Diodorus, and of others who wrote on this same topic, some of you will be obliged to admit that Orpheus, Homer, Solon (who wrote the Athenian laws), Pythagoras, Plato, and others, after they had visited Egypt and had made use of the history of Moses, began to circulate doctrines concerning the deities very different from the unfavorable opinions they had previously held.

Chapter 15

For example, I must call to mind what Orpheus, who was the first teacher of what I might call your polytheism, later said to his son,[1] Musaeus, and other closely-associated listeners concerning the one and only God. Here are his words:

1 Musaeus was the son of Eumolpi, not of Orpheus. Justin probably uses the word loosely to indicate a disciple or pupil.

'I speak to those who lawfully may hear:
All others, ye profane, now close the doors,
And, O Musaeus! hearken thou to me,
Who offspring art of the light-bringing moon:
The words I utter now are true indeed:
And if thou former thoughts of mine hast seen,
Let them not rob thee of the blessed life,
But rather turn the depths of thine own heart
Unto the place where light and knowledge dwell.
Take thou the word divine to guide thy steps,
And walking well in the straight certain path,
Look to the one and universal King—
One, self-begotten, and the only One,
Of whom all things and we ourselves are sprung.
All things are open to His piercing gaze,
While He Himself is still invisible.
Present in all His works, though still unseen,
He gives to mortals evil out of good,
Sending both chilling wars and tearful griefs;
And other than the great King there is none.
The clouds forever settle round His throne,
And mortal eyeballs in mere mortal eyes
Are weak, to see Jove reigning over all.
He sits established in the brazen heavens
Upon His golden throne; under His feet
He treads the earth, and stretches His right hand
To all the ends of ocean, and around
Tremble the mountain ranges and the streams,
The depths, too, of the blue and hoary sea.'

In another passage he wrote:

'There is one Zeus alone, one sun, one hell,
One Bacchus; and in all things but one God;

Nor of all these as diverse let me speak.'

And he uttered this oath:

'Now I adjure thee by the highest heaven,
The work of the great God, the only wise;
And I adjure thee by the Father's voice,
Which first He uttered when He established
The whole world by His counsel.'[2]

What does he mean when he writes: 'I adjure thee by the Father's voice, which first He uttered'? By 'the voice' he means the Word of God by whom heaven and earth and every creature were made, as we are taught by the divine prophecies of the holy men. Indeed, after Orpheus himself studied these prophetic sayings in Egypt, he knew that every creature was the work of the Word of God. For this reason, after he says: 'I adjure thee by the Father's voice, which first He uttered,' he adds: 'when He established the whole world by His counsel.' In this verse he calls the Word 'the voice' only for the sake of the poetic metre. This becomes evident from the fact that a few verses later, where the metre permitted, he called Him 'the Word.' Here is the verse: *'Take thou the Word divine to guide thy steps.'*

Chapter 16

I must also remind you of what the very old and ancient Sibyl (whom Plato, Aristophanes, and others, called a prophetess) taught you in her oracles concerning the one and only God. She says:

2 For these pseudo-Orphean verses, consult Clement of Alexandria, *Protrep.* 7.74; Eusebius (fragment of Aristobulus), *Praeparatio* 13.12; Theodoret of Cyrus, *De curandis Graec. affect.*, sermo 1; Tatian, *Oratio adv. Graecos* 8. (The translation of the verses is that used by M. Dods in *The Writings of Justin Martyr and Athenagoras*—Roberts and Donaldson's, Ante-Nicene Christian Library, 2. 302f.).

'There is one only unbegotten God,
Omnipotent, invisible, most high,
All seeing, but Himself seen by no flesh.'[1]

And in another passage:

'But we have strayed from the Immortal's ways,
And worship with a dull and senseless mind
Idols, the workmanship of our own hands,
And images and figures of dead men.'[2]

And again:

'Blessed shall be those men upon the earth
Who shall love the great God before all else,
Blessing Him when they eat and when they drink;
Trusting in this their piety alone.
Who shall abjure all shrines which they may see,
All altars and vain figures of dumb stones,
Worthless and stained with blood of animals,
And sacrifice of the four-footed tribes,
Beholding the great glory of One God.'[3]

Such are the words of the Sibyl.

Chapter 17

The poet Homer, by resorting to poetic license and by emulating Orpheus' original belief in polytheism, makes mention of several gods in a mythical way, lest his poetry should appear to differ from that of Orpheus, which he was so intent on imitating that in the very first verse of his Iliad he expressed his partiality toward him. As Orpheus had exclaimed at the beginning of his poem: *'O goddess, sing the wrath of Demeter, the bearer of fruit,'* Homer began his

1 1.8-10. Cf. J. Brettano, *Sibyllina Oracula* (Paris 1607).
2 3.721-722.
3 4.24ff.

Iliad thus: *'O goddess, sing the wrath of Achilles, the son of Peleus.'*[1] It appears to me that Homer here preferred to violate the poetic metre rather than be accused of having omitted from the start the names of the gods. But, shortly afterwards, he clearly and openly expressed his thoughts concerning the One and Only God, when, in one passage, he spoke thus to Achilles through Phoenix: *'Not though God Himself were to promise that He would strip me of my old age and restore me to my youthful strength.'*[2] By means of the pronoun he thus wished to indicate the true God. In another passage he has Ulysses address a Greek mob in this fashion: *'A plurality of rulers is evil; let there be but one ruler.'*[3] Homer then went on to show that rule by many is not a good, but an evil practice, by relating how such rule gave rise to wars, fights, cliques, and various conspiracies. The rule by one, on the other hand, is devoid of all contention.

Thus argued Homer.

Chapter 18

If you think we should prove that monotheism was testified to even by the dramatists, listen to these words of Sophocles:

'There is one God, in truth there is but one,
Who made the heavens and the broad earth
beneath,
The glancing waves of ocean and the winds.
But many of us mortals err in heart,
And set up for a solace in our woes
Images of the gods in stone and wood,
Or figures carved in brass or ivory,

1 *Iliad* 1.1.
2 Cf. Cowper, *Iliad* 9.551.
3 *Ibid.* 11.242.

And, furnishing for these our handiworks,
Both sacrifice and rite magnificent,
We think that thus we do a pious work.'[1]

Such is the testimony of Sophocles.

Chapter 19

His biographers point out that Pythagoras, son of Mnesarchus, who explained his own philosophical conclusions by means of mystical symbols, seems to have harbored thoughts about the unity of God, which may have been a profitable result of his sojourn in Egypt. He allegorically teaches that there is only one God when he states that unity is the first principle of all things and the cause of all good.[1] This becomes more evident from his statement that unity and one differ greatly from each other. He claims that unity belongs to that class of beings which are perceived by the intellect, whereas one belongs to the class of numbers. Now, if you wish a more explicit proof of the monotheism of Pythagoras, listen to the following quotation: 'God is one. And He is not, as some think, outside the world, but in it, for He is entirely in the whole circle looking over all generations. He is the blending agent of all ages; the executor of His own powers and deeds; the first cause of all things; the light in heaven; the Father of all; the mind and animating force of the universe; the motivating factor of all the heavenly bodies.'[1]

Such is the testimony of Pythagoras.

1 For these pseudo-Sophoclean verses, consult Clement of Alexandria, *Protrept.* 7.74; *Strom.* 5.14; Eusebius, *Praeparatio* 13.13; Cyril of Alexandria, *Adversus Julian,* 1; Theodoret of Cyrus, *De curandis Graec. affect.* sermo 7; Athenagoras, *Legat.* 5.

1 Cf. the *Life of Pythagoras,* in Photius, *Biblioth. cod.* 249; and Cyril of Alexandria, *Adv. Julian.*

Chapter 20

Although Plato very probably approved of the teaching of Moses and the other Prophets concerning the One and Only God, which he had learned during his visit to Egypt, yet he was afraid to say so, lest, after what had happened to Socrates, he might cause some Anytus or Meletus to come forward and accuse him before the Athenians in these words: 'Plato is a meddling fool who does much harm, for he does not accept the gods which the state recognizes.' Thus, in fear of the hemlock,[1] Plato composed an artfully ambiguous dissertation on the gods, in which he admitted gods for those who desired them, and denied their existence for the benefit of those who professed no deity. This is evident from an examination of his very words. For, after he stated that every created being is mortal, he affirmed that the gods were created. If, therefore, according to Plato, God and matter are the origin of all things, it must necessarily be concluded that the gods were made of matter. But, if they had their origin from matter, out of which he claims evil also originated, he leaves sound-thinking persons to draw their own conclusions as to the nature of gods who are made of matter. Indeed, to avoid just that conclusion, he taught that matter is uncreated, so he might not appear to affirm that God is the creator of evil. It is also clear that he made the following statement concerning the gods who were created by God: 'Gods of gods, of whom I am the creator.' He also seems to have had accurate knowledge of the existence of the true God. For, after he had heard in Egypt that God had said to Moses, when He was about to send him to the Hebrews:

1 For a similar accusation, see Athenagoras, *Apol.* 2.22; Eusebius, *Praeparatio* 2.6,7; Cyril of Alexandria, *Adv. Julian.;* Theodoret of Cyrus, *Adv. Graecos;* and St. Augustine in the beginning of his *De vera religione.*

'I am who am,'[2] he comprehended that God had not mentioned His own proper name to him.

Chapter 21

No proper name can really be applied to God, for names are used to indicate and distinguish many different subjects. Now, no one existed before God who could have given Him a name, nor did God Himself think it necessary to name Himself, since He is the One and Only God, as He Himself proclaimed through His Prophets when He said: 'I, God, am the first,' and, 'beside Me there is no other God.' Thus, as I stated above, God did not attribute any proper name to Himself when He sent Moses to the rescue of the Hebrews, but by means of a participle He showed in a mystic way that He is the One and Only God. 'For,' He states, 'I am the Being.' He thus openly contrasted Himself, 'the Being,' with the non-beings, in order to convince those who formerly had been deceived that they were not following beings, but those who had no being. God, therefore, knew that the first men still remembered that old trick with which that enemy of mankind, the Devil, tried to deceive their forefathers when he said to them: 'If you obey me in transgressing God's command, you shall become as gods.' He called those gods which had no being, so that men, in the supposition that there were other gods, might even think that they themselves could become gods. God therefore said to Moses: 'I am the Being,' in order to show by the participle 'being' the difference between God who is and those who are not. After they had thus been victimized by the tricky demon and had dared to transgress the command of God, men were driven out of Paradise. They remembered the name of gods, but

2 Exod. 3.14.

no longer were they taught by God that there are no other gods. It was not right that they who would not keep such an easy commandment as that first one should continue to be instructed by God; justice required that they should endure suitable punishment. Then, after they had been expelled from Paradise in the belief that this was only because of their disobedience, and not also because they had believed in the existence of gods which really did not exist, they applied the name of gods even to men who were later their own descendants. This first false notion of the gods was due, therefore, to the father of untruth. Realizing that this false knowledge of the gods afflicted the souls of men as a dread disease, God, desiring to remove and wipe it away, first appeared to Moses and said: 'I am He who is.' It was necessary, in my opinion, that the future chief and leader of the Hebrews should be the first to know of the living God. Consequently, having appeared to him first, in so far as it is possible for God to appear to mortals, He said to him: 'I am He who is.' Then, when He was about to send him forth to the Hebrews, He ordered Moses to say also to them: 'He who is has sent me to you.'

Chapter 22

Plato had learned all this in Egypt and he was especially impressed with the doctrine of one God. Yet, because he feared the Areopagus, he did not dare mention to the Athenians the name of Moses, because the latter had taught that there is only one God. But, in his carefully written work, the *Timaeus,* in which he discussed God's nature, he wrote as his own the same opinion as Moses concerning God. He wrote: 'It is my opinion that we must first determine what that is which always exists, but has no generation; and what that is which is always generated, but never really exists.'

My Greek friends, would an intelligent man not realize that we are here dealing with one and the same thing, with the sole difference of the article? Moses said: 'He who is,' while Plato wrote: 'That which is.' Either expression could be aptly applied to the God who exists forever, since He is the only one who exists eternally, and has no generation. We should also study his [Plato's] words carefully to determine what that other thing is which he contrasted to the eternally-existent God, and concerning which he wrote: 'And what that is which is always generated, but never really exists.' Indeed, we shall see that he clearly and wisely states that He who is unbegotten is eternal, whereas they who are begotten or created (about whom he claims it was said: 'Gods of gods, of whom I am the creator') are born and perish. For he wrote: 'It is my opinion that we must first determine what that is which always exists, but has no generation, and what that is which is always generated, but never really exists. The former, indeed, which is intelligently perceived by the mind, always exists in the same way, while the latter, which is based on opinion formed by the perception of the senses without the aid of reason, never really exists, since it is always coming into being and perishing.' To the intelligent, these words can only mean the death and destruction of the gods which have been created. This also should be noted, that Plato never calls Him the Creator, but the modeler of the gods, although in Plato's mind there is a great difference between the two. For the creator, since he needs nothing else, creates the creature by his own ability and power; on the contrary, the modeler produces his work only after he has received from matter the power to do so.

Chapter 23

Some, ever reluctant to renounce polytheism, will object, perhaps, that the creator said to these created gods: 'You are not immortal or indestructible, since you have been created; yet you shall not perish nor shall you be forced to endure death, since you gained my good will which is a greater and stronger bond.' Through fear of the polytheists, Plato here makes his 'creator' utter contradictory expressions. After first stating that he held that every created being is destructible, he now introduces him affirming the opposite. Furthermore, in making such statements, he is totally unaware of the impossibility of eluding the charge of falsehood. Indeed, it is evident that he told an untruth either at first, when he stated that every created being is destructible, or now, when he makes a contradictory statement. If, as he first affirmed, every created thing must be absolutely destructible, how can he reconcile the fact that he makes possible that which is absolutely impossible? It would seem that Plato in vain bestows upon his 'creator' an impossible power, when he claims that they who were once destructible, because created from matter, should, by the creator's power, again become indestructible and everlasting. For it is to be expected that the power of matter, which Plato considered to be uncreated, and therefore contemporaneous and co-existent with the creator, should withstand his will. Since one who has not created has no control over that which is uncreated, it follows that matter, which is free from any external agency, cannot possibly be controlled by it. With this in mind, Plato himself was forced to write: 'We must admit that violence cannot be inflicted upon God.'

Chapter 24

How can Plato justly exclude Homer from his republic

when the poet, in describing the ambassadors sent to Achilles, portrays Phoenix as addressing these words to the great warrior: 'Even the gods themselves may be turned'?[1] Homer did not apply these words to Plato's king and creator of gods, but to those many gods whom the Greeks esteemed as such, which is evident from Plato's expression, 'gods of gods.' Indeed, by his story of the golden chain[2] Homer showed that all power and rule reside in the One and First God. And he considered the rest of the gods so far beneath the First God's divinity that he did not hesitate to place them among the mortals. For instance, he introduces Ulysses speaking of Hector to Achilles in this fashion: *'He rages terribly, trusting in Zeus, nor reverences at all either men or gods.'*[3] To me it appears evident that Homer here betrays that he, like Plato, derived his knowledge of the one God while he was in Egypt, and that he clearly and openly affirmed that he who puts his trust in the really existing God does not give a thought to those non-existent gods. Thus, the poet, in another passage, by using another word with the same meaning, namely, a pronoun, employed the same participle as Plato to indicate the existing God, about whom Plato had written: 'What that is which always exists, but has no generation.' For it appears that the words of Phoenix were not said without a hidden meaning:

> *'No, not would God Himself*
> *Promise me, reaping smooth this silver beard,*
> *To make me downy-cheek'd as in my youth.'*[4]

The pronoun 'Himself' indicates the really existing God. You will find another example of this pronoun in your

1 *Iliad* 9.497 (Cowper's translation, verse 616).
2 Cf. *Iliad* 9.18ff.
3 *Iliad* 9.238 (Cowper's translation, verse 294).
4 *Iliad* 9.450 (Cowper's translation, verse 551).

oracle concerning the Chaldaeans and Hebrews. For, when someone had asked what men ever had lived piously, you admit that the oracle replied:

'Only the Chaldaeans and Hebrews found wisdom,
Who worship God Himself, the self-begotten King.'[5]

Chapter 25

With what right, therefore, does Plato censure Homer for his statement that the gods are changeable, for it is evident from the very text that Homer said this for some good reason? They who hope to experience mercy through their prayer and sacrifices must repent of their sins and avoid them in the future. Those persons, however, who believe that God is unchangeable would in no way feel obliged to cease sinning, since in their state of mind they cannot perceive how repentance would help them. How, then, can Plato, the philosopher, condemn Homer, the poet, for his statement that 'even the gods themselves may be turned'? Yet, he himself speaks of the creator of the gods as so changeable that he at one time affirms that the gods are mortal, and at another time that they are immortal. Not only is his teaching concerning the gods contradictory, but also his concept of matter, for matter (from which he believes the created gods have necessarily been produced) he sometimes states is uncreated, and at other times created. Yet, when he teaches that the creator of gods is so easily changeable, he does not realize that he himself is thus guilty of the very errors for which he censured Homer, although Homer said the op-

5 Eusebius (*Praeparatio* 9.10) asserts that Porphyrius had recorded this oracle in his *De philosophia ex oraculis.*

posite about the creator of gods. For he wrote that he spoke thus of himself:

> *'For ne'er my promise shall deceive, or fail,*
> *Or be recalled if with a nod confirmed.'*[1]

But it seems that Plato, against his will and only in deference to the polytheists, made such unusual utterances concerning the gods. Whatever he thought safe to divulge of that knowledge of the One God which he had learned from Moses and the Prophets he alluded to in a crytic way, so that he might reveal his opinion to those who wished to worship the true God. He found great delight in the words which God addressed to Moses, 'I am the existing' [One], and, after pondering over this short participial expression, he realized that God wanted to indicate to Moses His eternity and thus said: 'I am the existing' [One]. For the word 'existing' expresses not only one time, but all three—the past, present, and future. The same must be said of Plato's expression, 'never really existing,' where the participle 'existing' indicates indefinite time. For the word 'never' does not refer to the past, as some think, but to future time. Even profane writers have correctly interpreted this point. Thus, when Plato attempted to decipher, so to speak, for the unenlightened what had been cryptically signified by the participle concerning the eternity of God, he used these words, 'Indeed God, as the old tradition affirms, contains the beginning, the end, and the middle of all things.' By the words, 'the old tradition,' Plato clearly and openly alludes to the law of Moses, but, fearing the hemlock, he did not dare mention him by name whose teaching, he well knew, was hateful to the Greeks. Yet he clearly meant Moses by appealing to the antiquity of the tradition. Now, we have sufficiently shown earlier, from the writings

1 *Iliad* 1.526 (Cowper's translation, verse 646).

of Diodorus and the other historians, that the law of Moses is not only old, but also the first. Diodorus himself admits that Moses, the first of all the lawmakers, [lived] before the invention of Greek letters which they used in writing their histories.

Chapter 26

Nor should anyone be surprised to find that Plato adhered to Moses' teaching concerning the eternity of God. You will find that he makes many cryptic references ascribing to the Prophets (who are next to the really existing God) the true knowledge of things. For example, when discussing certain first principles in his *Timaeus,* he wrote: 'We set this as the first principle of fire and of other bodies, proceeding by necessity according to probability. But what the first principles of these again are, God above knows, and those men who are dear to Him.' And what other men would he consider dear to God, except Moses and the other Prophets? Indeed, he read their prophecies and adopted their doctrine of the judgment, which he thus expounds in the first book of his *Republic*: 'When a man first feels that death is approaching, he is filled with fear and begins to worry about things which have never before concerned him. Those stories about how the unjust man will be punished in Hades, which he always laughed at, now begin to torture his soul with doubts that they may be true. Now, either because of the infirmities of old age or because of the proximity of death, he begins to pay more attention to them. Gradually filled with anxiety and fear, he starts to examine his conscience to determine whether he has harmed anyone. That man who then finds that he has committed many iniquities during his life, begins to awaken with a start from his sleep as children do, and he lives in a constant state of hopeless terror. But the man

who is conscious of not having sinned has, in the words of Pindar,[1] sweet hope as the constant companion and good nurse of his old age. Pindar expressed this well, Socrates, when he said: "Whoever leads a holy and just life is accompanied by sweet hope, the nurse of old age who soothes the heart and rules the inconstant minds of men." '[2] He wrote this in the first book of the *Republic*.

Chapter 27

In the tenth book [of his *Republic*], Plato wrote in no uncertain words what he had learned about the judgment from the Prophets, but, fearing the Greeks, he would not dare admit the real source of his information. Instead, he invented a story of having heard about the judgment from a man who had been killed in battle. He claimed that on the twelfth day, when this man was about to be buried—in fact, when he was already lying on the funeral pyre—he came to life again and began to describe the other world. Here are Plato's own words: 'He said that, when he arrived, another was asked by someone else where the great Aridaeus was. This Aridaeus had been a tyrant in a city of Pamphylia and was said to have murdered both his aged father and his elder brother, besides having committed many other wicked deeds. He then said that the person who had been questioned replied: "He has not, nor will he ever, come to this place. For, among other horrible sights, we saw the following. When we were close to the mouth [of the pit], and were on the point of escaping, after having undergone every possible torment, we suddenly saw Aridaeus and others like him, most of whom had been tyrants. But among them were also some

1 This passage is not found in the extant works of Pindar.
2 Cf. Plato, *Republic* 1.

who, as private citizens, had committed detestable crimes. Now, when any of these incorrigible sinners thought that they could escape and tried to do so by ascending before paying the full penalty for their crimes, the mouth would let out a roar and impede them. Then, wild, fiery-looking men stood around and, when they heard the roar, took hold of some and led them away. But, after binding the hands and feet of Aridaeus and the rest, they struck their heads against the ground, beat them soundly, dragged them out on to the road, and lacerated them with thorns, in order to signify to those present the reason for these torments, and that they were going to lead them away to cast them into Tartarus. Thus, he said the greatest of their fears was that the mouth would roar when they ascended, because, if it remained silent, each one would most gladly ascend. He finally pointed out that the punishments and tortures were all of this type, whereas the rewards were the direct opposite." [1] It appears to me that Plato gives evidence of having learned from the Prophets not only the doctrine of the judgment, but also of the resurrection, which the Greeks refuse to believe. For, when he states that the soul is judged together with the body, he surely proves that he believed in the doctrine of the resurrection. Otherwise, how could Aridaeus and the others have undergone such torments in Hades, if they had left [forever] on earth the body, with its head, hands, feet, and skin? They certainly will never affirm that the soul has a head and hands and feet and skin. But Plato, when he became acquainted in Egypt with the teachings of the Prophets, borrowed their doctrine of the resurrection of the body, and taught that the soul is judged along with the body.

1 Plato, *Republic* 10.

Chapter 28

Plato was not the only Greek to have become enlightened in Egypt. Homer betrayed a similar debt when he said that Tityus was punished as Aridaeus had been. In explaining to Alcinous his power of divination through the spirits of the dead, Ulysses said:

> *'There Tityus, large and long, in fetters bound,*
> *O'erspreads nine acres of infernal ground;*
> *Two ravenous vultures, furious for their food,*
> *Scream o'er the fiend, and riot in his blood,*
> *Incessant gore the liver in his breast,*
> *The immortal liver grows, and gives the immortal feast.'*[1]

It is undeniable that it is not the soul, but the body, which has a liver. He likewise stated that both Sisyphus and Tantalus endured torments of the body [after death]. Diodorus, a most famous historian, is our authority that Homer had visited Egypt, and had incorporated into his poetry much of what he had learned there. He stated that when he was in Egypt he had learned that Helen had received from Polydamna, wife of Theon, and carried back to Sparta a drug[2] which 'lulled all sorrow and anger, and caused oblivion of all ills.'[3] Homer affirmed that, by using this drug, Helen was able to end the complaints of Menelaus against the presence of Telemachus. Another result of Homer's visit to Egypt was that he applied the adjective *golden* to Venus, for he had seen the temple which in Egypt is called the temple of *golden* Venus, and the plain called the plain of *golden* Venus. Why do I bring up this point? Simply to prove that the poet bor-

1 *Odyssey* 11.576 (Cf. Alexander Pope's translation, verse 709).
2 This drug was probably opium.
3 *Odyssey* 4.221.

rowed much for his own poem from the divine writings of the Prophets. First of all, he borrowed from Moses' account of the beginning of the creation of the world. Here, indeed, are the words of Moses: 'In the beginning God created the heaven and earth, then the sun, the moon, and the stars.'[4] Now, after he became acquainted with the Mosaic writings in Egypt and had been very pleased with what he wrote on the *genesis* of the world, Homer invented a fable about Vulcan, who was supposed to have represented the creation of the world on the shield of Achilles. Here are Homer's words:

> *'There earth, there heaven, there ocean he design'd;*
> *The unwearied sun, the moon completely round;*
> *The starry lights that heaven's high convex crown'd.*[5]

He also pictured the garden of Alcinous as a place forever in bloom and full of every sort of fruit. By this means he tried to make it resemble the [Mosaic] description of Paradise. He thus wrote:

> *'Tall thriving trees confess'd the fruitful mould:*
> *The reddening apple ripens here to gold.*
> *Here the blue fig with luscious juice o'erflows,*
> *With deeper red the full pomegranate glows;*
> *The branch here bends beneath the weighty pear,*
> *And verdant olives flourish round the year.*
> *The balmy spirit of the western gale*
> *Eternal breathes on fruits, untaught to fail:*
> *Each dropping pear a following pear supplies,*
> *On apples apples, figs on figs arise:*
> *The same mild season gives the blooms to blow,*

4 Cf. Gen. 1.1.
5 Pope's translation of *Iliad* 18.483.

The buds to harden, and the fruits to grow.
Here order'd vines in equal ranks appear,
With all the united labours of the year;
Some to unload the fertile branches run,
Some dry the blackening clusters in the sun,
Others to tread the liquid harvest join:
The groaning presses foam with floods of wine.
Here are the vines in early flower descried,
Here grapes discolour'd on the sunny side,
And there in autumn's richest purple dyed.'[6]

Does this quotation not prove a clearly positive imitation of what the first Prophet Moses said of Paradise? Furthermore, if anyone would desire a description of the building of that tower[7] by which the men of those times foolishly thought they could reach heaven, he can find a sufficiently accurate, although metaphorical, imitation of the story in the following quotation of Homer, where he ascribes the story to Otus and Ephialtes:

'Proud of their strength, and more than mortal size,
The gods they challenge, and affect the skies:
Heaved on Olympus tottering Ossa stood;
On Ossa, Pelion nods with all his wood.'[8]

This same can be said about the doctrine of the one who was cast out of Heaven, that enemy of mankind, whom the Sacred Scriptures call the Devil,[9] because of his first diabolical persecution of men. On close examination, one would find that, although Homer never uses the name, 'Devil,' yet he

6 Pope's translation of *Odyssey* 7.114.
7 Tower of Babel. Cf. Gen. 11.
8 Pope's translation of *Odyssey* 11.312.
9 The calumniator who harms men by lodging false charges against them.

gives him a name from his most wicked crime. The poet calls him Ate[10] and affirms that he was cast from heaven by their god. In this he shows an accurate remembrance of what the Prophet Isaias had said about the Devil. Here are the poet's words:

> *'And, seizing by her glossy locks*
> *The goddess Ate, in his wrath he swore*
> *That never to the starry skies again,*
> *And the Olympian heights, he would permit*
> *The universal mischief to return.*
> *Then whirling her around, he cast her down*
> *To earth. She, mingling with all works of men,*
> [Caused many a pang to Jove].'[11]

Chapter 29

Plato states that, next to God and matter, form is the third of the original principles of things. Now, even this doctrine he borrowed from no one else but Moses. He discovered the word *form* in the writings of Moses. Unfortunately, he did not understand the true meaning of the word, for he had no expert to point out to him that it is impossible completely to comprehend the writings of Moses without a certain mystic insight. Moses wrote that God had spoken to him about the tabernacle in these words, 'And you shall make for Me the pattern of the tabernacle according to all that I show you in the mount.'[1] And in the same passage: 'And you shall build the tabernacle according to the pattern of all the vessels for the service thereof; thus you shall make it.' Then again, in a later passage: 'Thus then you shall

10 The goddess of mischief.
11 Cowper's translation of *Iliad* 19.126.

1 Exod. 25.9.

make it according to the pattern that was shown to you in the mount.'[2] Now, Plato read these passages and, not comprehending their real meaning, thought that form had some kind of separate existence before that which the senses perceive. Thus, he often calls it the pattern of created things, because Moses in his writings spoke thus of the tabernacle: 'According to the form that has been shown to you in the mount, thus you shall make it.'

Chapter 30

It is obvious that he was likewise misled in his teaching on heaven and earth and man, for he fancies that there are [subsistent] ideas of these. Since Moses wrote: 'In the beginning God created heaven and earth,' and then added: 'And the earth was invisible and unfinished,' he [Plato] thought that the words, 'The earth was,' indicated the pre-existent earth, because Moses had said: 'And the earth was invisible and unfinished.' He also thought that the earth mentioned in the words, 'God created heaven and earth,' was that earth perceived by the senses and made by God according to a pre-existent form. Plato likewise thought that the heaven (also called a firmament) which was created was the heaven which the senses can perceive, whereas the heaven which the mind perceives is the other heaven of which the Prophet said: 'The heaven of heaven is the Lord's, but the earth He has given to the children of men.'[1] The same misunderstanding is evident in his doctrine on man. Moses first mentions the name of man. Later, after describing the creation of many other beings, he returns to man and describes his creation in these

2 Exod. 25.40.

1 Ps. 113.16.

words, 'And God made man, taking dust from the earth.'[2] Plato was deceived into believing that the man who was first named [by Moses] existed before the man whose creation was later described, and that the creation of the man formed of the earth was according to the pre-existent form. Even Homer, after having read that ancient and divine history which states: 'Dust thou art, and into dust thou shalt return,'[3] and realizing that man was formed from the soil, calls the corpse of Hector dumb clay. In censuring Achilles for dragging the dead body of Hector, he wrote somewhere:

'On the dumb clay he cast indignity,
Blinded with rage.'[4]

In another passage, he describes how Menelaus addressed these words to his warriors who were reluctant to accept Hector's challenge to single combat: *'May you all return to earth and water.'*[5] Thus, in his anger, he wished them to return to their ancient and original formation from the earth.

Both Homer and Plato expressed these opinions in their own writings, after they had learned them in Egypt from the ancient books of history.

Chapter 31

Where else could Plato have picked up the story of Jupiter driving across the heavens in a winged chariot, if not in the prophetic writings? He fabricated such a story from the following description of the cherubim by the Prophet: 'And the glory of the Lord went out from the house and rested on the cherubim; and the cherubim lifted up their wings, and the wheels with them; and the glory of the Lord God of

2 Gen. 2.7.
3 Gen. 3.19.
4 Cf. *Iliad* 24.
5 *Iliad* 7.99.

Israel was over them.'[1] Inspired by this, the grandiloquent Plato confidently exclaims: 'The great Jupiter, driving his winged chariot across the heaven.' If not from Moses and the Prophets, from what other source could Plato have learned what he wrote? And what was the origin of his statement that God exists in a fiery substance? Was it not the following passage from the third Book of Kings: 'The Lord is not in the wind; and after the wind an earthquake, but the Lord is not in the earthquake; and after the earthquake a fire, but the Lord is not in the fire; and after the fire a whistling of a gentle air'?[2] These words must be meditated upon and interpreted by God-fearing men in a spiritual sense. Plato, on the other hand, because he was not able to grasp their higher meaning, understood these words as meaning that God exists in a fiery substance.

Chapter 32

To one who ponders over the gift bestowed upon holy persons by God—a gift which the holy Prophets call the Holy Spirit—it is evident that Plato described it under another name in his dialogue with Meno. Indeed, afraid to call the gift of God the Holy Spirit, lest he be considered an enemy of the Greek people by adhering to the teaching of the Prophets, he admits that this gift descends from God. Yet, refusing to name it the Holy Spirit, he calls it virtue. In his dialogue with Meno on the question of recollection, after a thorough discussion of virtue—whether or not it could be taught, or whether it could be acquired by constant practice, or whether it could be attained neither by practice nor study, but was a natural endowment of man, or whether it

1 Ezech. 11.22.
2 3 Kings 19.11-12.

was acquired in some other way—he makes this statement: 'If we have conducted our discussion properly, and have followed the right line of reasoning, we must conclude that virtue is not obtained by study, and that it is not a natural gift, but that the men who have it acquired it through divine providence.' It is my opinion that what Plato learned from the Prophets concerning the Holy Spirit he applied to what he calls virtue. For instance, as the holy Prophets state that the one and same Spirit is divided into seven spirits, so does Plato call it the one and same virtue which is divided into four virtues. In this way, he avoided the use of the name, 'Holy Spirit,' while he allegorically repeated what the Prophets had said of the Holy Spirit. Thus, toward the end of the dialogue with Meno, he said: 'From what we have said, Meno, it appears that they who possess virtue acquired it by divine providence. But we shall have a clearer understanding of how men obtain virtue, if we first investigate independently the very nature of virtue.' You therefore see how he applies the name 'virtue' to the gift which descends from above, yet admits the validity of an inquiry to determine whether that gift should be called by the name 'virtue' or by some other name. Lest he should be accused of following the doctrine of the Prophets, he was afraid openly to call it the Holy Spirit.

Chapter 33

We could also ask where Plato learned that time was created together with the heavens. He wrote: 'Time was therefore created together with the heavens, so that, as they were created together, they might also disintegrate together, if such need be.' Did he not discover this in the sacred history of Moses? He knew that the creation of time was, from the beginning, made up of days, months, and years. Now, since

that first day which was created together with the heavens constituted the very beginning of all time (for, after Moses had written: 'In the beginning God created heaven and earth,' he added: 'And one day was made,'[1] as if to designate the whole of time by a part of it), Plato calls the day 'time,' lest, by using the word 'day' he should be charged by the Athenians of having slavishly imitated the expressions of Moses. Where, too, did he learn what he has written about the disintegration of the heavens? Did he not borrow this opinion from the holy Prophets whose writings he interpreted in this fashion?

Chapter 34

Furthermore, if one studies the question of idols, and investigates why the first makers of your gods gave them human forms, he will discover that this, too, owed its origin to the sacred writings. Since Moses, speaking in the name of God, says in his history: 'Let us make man to our image and likeness,'[1] they [erroneously] imagined that men were similar to God in form. Consequently, they began thus to shape their gods, believing that they could make a likeness from another one. But why, my Greek friends, am I led to recall these things? For the sole purpose of convincing you that it is impossible to learn the true religion from those who could not write anything original, even on those topics through which they aroused the admiration of the pagan world, but merely repeated, in allegorical language, what they had borrowed from Moses and the other Prophets.

1 Gen. 1.1.5.

1 Gen. 1.26.

Chapter 35

Now is the hour, O Greeks, that you (convinced by your own historians that Moses and the other Prophets were far more ancient than any of those whom you honored as sages among you) renounce the ancient error of your ancestors and read the sacred prophetic writings in order to learn from them the true religion. The Prophets do not strive to impress you with a skillful use of words, nor do they resort to specious or persuasive arguments (a device of those who endeavor to rob you of the truth), but with the simple words and phrases that first come to mind they relate to you whatever the Holy Spirit, who descended upon them, wished to transmit through them to those desirous of knowing the true religion. Renounce, therefore, all human respect, and the time-worn error of mankind, and the empty sound of pompous passages (through the use of which you consider yourselves possessed of every advantage), and devote yourselves to truly profitable things. It cannot be said that you will offend your ancestors by embracing a doctrine opposed to their error, since they very probably are now bewailing their lot in Hades and are touched with deep remorse and repentance. Were it possible for them to warn you of what happened to them after their death, you would surely know from what terrible evils they wished you to be saved. But, since it is now impossible in this present life to learn anything from them or from those who here teach an erroneous philosophy, the natural conclusion is that you should renounce the error of your ancestors, read the prophetic writings of the holy men—not expecting from them elegant phrases (for the exercise of our religion rests upon deeds, not words)—and learn from them the means of eternal life. For they who rashly discredit the name of philosophy are obliged unwillingly to admit that they are convicted of know-

ing nothing, since they not only contradict one another, but even express their own opinions in an inconsistent way.

Chapter 36

Now, if the aim of philosophy, according to them, is the discovery of truth, how can they be called true philosophers who do not have a knowledge of truth? Socrates, indeed, was the wisest of your wise men according to your oracle, which, you say, made the following statement: 'Socrates is the wisest of all men.' Now, if Socrates confesses that he knows nothing, how can they who came after him presume to know even heavenly things? Socrates, indeed, affirmed that he was called wise, because, while others pretended to know what they did not know, he did not hesitate to admit that he knew nothing. For he said: 'I seem to be the wisest because of this one fact, that I do not think that I know what I do not know.' Now, should anyone conclude that Socrates, in a sarcastic way, merely feigned ignorance in this instance, as he did on so many other occasions during his discussions, his last words of self-defense, spoken while he was being led to prison, show how serious and truthful he was in admitting his own ignorance: 'But now is the time for us to part. I go to die, you to live. Only God knows which of us goes to the better state.' After speaking these last words in the Areopagus, Socrates went to prison, testifying to the fact that only God knows the things that are concealed from us. Yet they who came after Socrates profess to know heavenly things as though they had seen them, when they do not even have a knowledge of earthly matters. Thus, Aristotle, as if he had witnessed heavenly things more closely than Plato, affirmed that God did not exist in a fiery substance (Plato's doctrine), but in the air, the fifth element. And he who

demanded assent to these theories of his, because of his excellent manner of expression, died in humiliation and dishonor when he could not determine the nature of the Euripus in Chalcis.[1] The intelligent man, therefore, must not prefer the eloquence of these men to his own salvation, but he must stuff his ears with wax, as in the ancient fable, and flee the sweet injury that these sirens would inflict upon him. For the above-mentioned writers, by using their smooth style as a kind of bait, have tried to lure many away from true religion, and in doing so they emulate him who dared to spread polytheism among the first men. I beg you not to listen to such persons, but to read the prophetic writings of the holy men, instead. If laziness or your old ancestral superstition keeps you from reading their prophetic writings which would acquaint you with the One and Only God (which is the first mark of the true religion), at least believe him who, although he at first taught you polytheism, later was obliged to sign a useful and needed recantation—I refer to Orpheus, who said what I mentioned above. Believe those others, too, who wrote in the same fashion about the One God. Indeed, it was for your sake that the providence of God caused them, against their will, to testify to the truth of what the Prophets said concerning the One God, so that, with the universal abandonment of polytheism, you might have a chance to know the truth.

Chapter 37

Nor would it be difficult for you to acquire a partial knowl-

1 This account is now considered to be a fable.

edge of the true religion from the ancient Sibyl,[1] who, through some kind of strong inspiration, issued oracular pronouncements that appeared very similar to the doctrine of the Prophets. It is said that the Sibyl was of Babylonian descent, being the daughter of Berosus, author of the *History of Chaldaea.* After she had traversed the sea and had arrived (I do not know how) in the province of Campania, she began to utter her oracles in Cumae, a city six miles from Baiae, where the hot springs of Campania are located. On a visit to that city we went to a certain place and saw there a very large basilica cut out of one stone—a truly magnificent and admirable work of art.[2] The inhabitants told us it was a local tradition, handed down from their ancestors, that in this place the Sibyl used to announce her oracles. In the center of the basilica they pointed out three vessels carved from one stone, and told us that she used to bathe in them when they were filled with water, and that, after she again put on her robe, she would enter the basilica's innermost room (which was also cut from that same stone), and there in the middle of that room would sit on a throne over a raised platform and give her oracular answers. Many writers, even Plato himself in his *Phaedrus,* speak of the Sibyl as a prophetess. In fact, I

1 Under the name of the *Sibylline Oracles* there circulated, especially in the second and third centuries A.D., a collection of supposed prophecies attributed to the various Sibyls (Varro named ten of them. Cf. Lactantius, *De div. inst.* 50.6). The oracles quoted in this work are supposed to have been uttered by the Cimmerian (or Cumaean) Sibyl in Campania, Italy. In pagan times these oracles were carefully collected and generally venerated by the populace. In order to spread Judaism, some Alexandrian Jews, in the second century B.C., forged some of these oracles. The Christians later did likewise. Consequently, by the second and third centuries A.D. there were several collections of these hexameter oracles of pagan, Jewish, and Christian origin. With the disappearance of paganism, their popularity dwindled, although they were sometimes quoted during the Middle Ages.

2 Tourists may still see this underground building as it was in Justin's time.

think that it was because he read her prophecies that Plato considered Prophets to be divine persons. Since he actually saw happen what she had long before foretold, it was natural for him, as he did in his dialogue with Meno, to express his awe and admiration of the Prophets in these words: 'Those persons whom we now call prophets we should really call divine. Indeed, we would rightly consider them divine and endowed with the gift of ecstasy through the inspiration and possession of God, when they foretell exactly many great events, while they are totally unconscious of what they are saying.' In this passage Plato clearly referred to the Sibylline prophecies. For, unlike the poets who, after they have completed their poems, can correct and polish their metre, the Sibyl had the prophetic gift at the time of inspiration, but when that time ended, she lost all remembrance of what she had said. For this reason, not all the metres of the Sibylline verses have been preserved. On that same visit to the city our guide not only pointed out the places where she used to prophesy, but also a brass casket which was said to have contained her remains. Among the many other old stories they repeated for our benefit was one that the persons who copied down her oracles were not too well educated and quite often did not copy the metre accurately. Consequently, her verses were often without metre, both because she could never recall what she had said, after she came out of her spell (during which she was inspired and possessed by God), and because her reporters, through lack of knowledge, did not copy her metres correctly. It is thus clear that Plato had the Sibylline oracles in mind when he made the following comment on the Prophets: 'When they foretell exactly many great events, they are totally unconscious of what they are saying.'

Chapter 38

But, O citizens of Greece, since the essentials of the true religion are found neither in poetic metres nor in your greatly esteemed culture, you should pay less attention to accuracy of metre and language, and more to the Sibylline utterances, for you will thereby realize what great blessings she will bestow upon you by her unmistakable prediction of the coming of our Savior Jesus Christ.[1] Indeed, this same Jesus Christ, being the Word of God, inseparable from Him in power, assumed the nature of man (who had been made to the image and likeness of God), and restored to us the religion of our ancestors, which their posterity abandoned through the instigation of the envious demon, and turned to the worship of those who were not gods at all. If you are in doubt and find it hard to believe our doctrine of the creation of man, at least listen to those whom, up to this time, you have considered worthy of belief; realize that your own oracle, when requested by someone to utter a hymn in honor of Almighty God, spoke these words in the middle of the hymn: 'Who formed the first man and called him Adam.'[2] Many persons whom we know still keep this hymn at hand to convince those who refuse to believe this truth which is attested to by everyone. If, my Greek friends, you prefer your own salvation to the false rumors of false gods, believe, as I said, the most ancient and venerable Sibyl, whose books are preserved throughout the whole world, and who teaches us by some superhuman inspiration that those beings which are called gods do not really exist at all. She also uttered explicit prophecies about the future coming of our Savior Jesus Christ, and about the things which He would do. A thorough knowl-

1 Cf. *Sibylline Oracles* 1.325.
2 Cf., also, *Sibylline Oracles* 1.26.

edge of these things will be a necessary preparation for your study of the writings of the holy Prophets. If, however, any one should object that he has acquired his knowledge of God from the most ancient of the so-called philosophers, let him listen to Ammon and Mercury. The former, in his treatise on God, affirms that He is absolutely hidden from us; while Mercury clearly states that it is very difficult to comprehend God, and that it is impossible for the man who can comprehend God to reveal Him to others. Thus, after considering the question from every angle, we must come to the conclusion that it is impossible to attain a knowledge of God and of the true religion, except through the Prophets who teach us by divine inspiration.